

JUNE 1996 - 1997

THE IVORYTON



1908



PLAYHOUSE

SEASON

## ~~~ Love Letters To River Rep ~~~

"Roses are red, violets are blue - when it comes to theater,  
we only want you!" Gino & Susan Origlia

"It's been a glorious Ten, next ten will be even more  
glorious!" Cameron & Tricia Pfaore-Duncan

"Congratulations on your 10th year. I hope there are  
many, many more." Lynn Johnson

"We haven't missed a season because you are terrific!  
Thanks! Dave & Marie McFarlin

"Diana, Jane, Julia, Martha, Rosemary, et al, spread  
sparkle over our summers! Dee, Bill, Amy & Gigi Grover

"Like a Drop of Rain in a Desert" - Thank you all  
(especially Warren). Thirsty Elinor

"Cheers to a most creative crew - you make every summer  
memorable!" Peggy & Martin Baer

"River Rep Folk - Thanks for ten years of "Great"  
Entertainment! I love you." Helen Dugall-Surkin

"Thanks for great Theater by great people who bring  
great joy! Jean DeGrooth

"U.S.A.'s #1 Town is proud to salute a prime asset,  
River Rep! Albert & Marian Dock

"Dear Partners, Arthur, and loving memories of Jim  
Wilson . . . You're the BEST!!" Love, Wilma

"Your gifts to us, both on and off the stage, will last our  
lifetimes. Thank you." Connie T.



\_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_  
***Ivoryton Playhouse***

**1996 SEASON**

**10TH ANNIVERSARY . . .**

**CELEBRATE OUR BEST SEASON EVER!**

**BEDROOM FARCE**

*by Alan Ayckbourn*

4 couples, 3 bedrooms, a million laughs!  
Mad party by the master of British comedy

**June 18 - June 29**

**PRELUDE TO A KISS**

*by Craig Lucas*

Bewitching fairy tale romance - so original  
it took Broadway and the screen by storm!

**July 2 - July 13**

**MORNING'S AT SEVEN**

*by Paul Osborn*

The loves, hates, and humor of life in  
a typical old-fashioned American family

**July 16 - July 27**

**SOMETHING'S AFOOT**

*by McDonald, Vos and Gerlach*

Murder at the mansion ... set to music  
Tuneful whodunnit ... songs, shrieks, shivers!

**July 30 - Aug. 10**

**ALL IN THE TIMING**

*by David Ives*

Fresh from New York - this sextet  
of screamingly funny one acts

**Aug. 13 - Aug. 24**

**EDNA**

*by Pamela Bond*

Old Lyme playwright's  
new comedy mystery

**Aug. 27 - Sept. 1**

THE RIVER REP

*at the*

IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE

*presents*

# BEDROOM FARCE

*by*

ALAN AYCKBOURN

*starring*

Kate  
Anthony

Michael  
Daly

Warren  
Kelley

Julia  
Kiley

Joan  
Shepard

Evan  
Thompson

Jenn  
Thompson

Owen  
Thompson

*Directed by*

JANE STANTON

*Settings by*

Ron Gasparinetti

*Lighting by*

Greg Guarnaccia

*Costumes by*

Jennie Cleaver

*Sound Design by*

Richard Loyd

*Production Stage Manager*

Terry T. Terzakis\*



## THE RIVER REP

## THE RIVER REP

James W. Kelley

Evan Thompson

DON'T MISS THE REST OF OUR  
EXCITING SEASON

★ **PRELUDE TO A KISS** July 2 - July 13  
*Bewitching fairy tale romance – so original it  
 took Broadway and the screen by storm!*

★ MORNING'S AT SEVEN July 16 - July 27  
The loves, hates and humor of life in a  
typical old-fashioned American Family

★ **SOMETHING'S AFOOT** July 30 - August 10  
*Murder at the mansion . . . set to music*  
*Tuneful whodunnit . . . songs, shrieks, shivers!*

★ **ALL IN THE TIMING** August 13 - August 24  
*Fresh from New York – this sextet of  
 screamingly funny one acts*

★ EDNA August 27 - September 1  
*Old Lyme playwright's new comedy mystery*

# SNET All Distance.<sup>SM</sup>

Savings so simple, you don't have to think about it



# BEDROOM FARCE

## CAST

*(in order of appearance)*

Ernest .....	Evan Thompson*
Delia .....	Joan Shepard*
Nick .....	Michael Daly
Jan .....	Kate Anthony
Malcolm .....	Warren Kelley*
Kate .....	Jenn Thompson*
Trevor .....	Owen Thompson*
Susannah .....	Julia Kiley*

Understudy for Jan, Kate, Delia and Susannah – Heather Sterling  
For Nick, Ernest, Malcolm and Trevor – Christian Orobello

*\*Member of Actors' Equity Association  
The Union of Professional Actors and  
Stage Managers in the United States*

The action takes place in three bedrooms

ACT ONE – Saturday evening, 7:00 p.m.

★ There will be one 15 Minute Intermission ★

ACT TWO – A few moments later

The time is the present

The use of cameras and/or recording devices is strictly prohibited.

*The River Rep is a division of Fanfare Theatre Ensemble, Inc.*

# PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager .....	Arthur A. Pignataro
Press Representative.....	Wilma Brewer Asch
Technical Director .....	Ron Gasparinetti
Assistant Technical Director .....	Greg Tito
Master Carpenter .....	David Krodell
Master Electrician .....	Kevin O'Connor
Sound Technician .....	Karen Joy Levitan
Fight Choreography by .....	David Dean Hastings
Set Painting Apprentice .....	Emily Richmond
Electrics Crew .....	Erik Johnson, Lewis Meier, Lynnette Provost, Amphone Souphanya, Russ Turner
Assistant Press Representative .....	Erin Kiernan
Special Production Assistants .....	Mike & Pat Boone, Rick Hoskins, Students from Killingly High School, Christian Orobello
Photography by .....	Harold Shapiro
Box Office Manager .....	Heather Sterling
Box Office Staff .....	Felicity Amos, Diane Johnson, Christian Orobello
House Manager .....	Liudvika Malkovas
Assistant House Manager .....	Christian Orobello
Children's Show House Manager .....	Nicky Dominijanni
Ushers .....	Friends of the River Rep
Concessions .....	The Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation

The River Rep would like to thank the following individuals, establishments and organizations who continue to make our summer seasons possible: Aggie's Again, Mark Annunziata, The Antique Brush Factory, Centerbridge Books, Jerry Clark, Jean DeGrooth, Lorraine Donovan and Albion Watts, Dee and Bill Grover, Wendy of Hairtique, Mr. Hines and the custodial crew of John Winthrop Jr. High School, Rick Hoskins and his crew from Killingly High School, The Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation, The Ivoryton Library, The Ivoryton Store, Roger LeCompte and Helen Smits, Chuck and Sue Longton, Irma Martin, Oliver's Restaurant, Gino and Sue Origlia, Porch & Patio, Stonington, CT, Dalia Ramanauskas, RSVP New London, Mary and Paul Risseuw, Nancy Schieferdecker, SNET, Summit St. Liquors, Connie Tredwell, Pauline and Bill Veilette, Trip and Susan Wyeth, Geoff and Rosalie Zonder – and the many other businesses and individuals without whom it would be impossible for us to be here.

## THE RIVER REP

is a proud contributor to

### Broadway Cares – Equity Fights Aids

Please join us in supporting this organization by  
dropping a donation in the basket in the lobby.

Take a Red Ribbon to wear – and show that you care.

*Thank You !*

# *The Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation*

## *wishes to thank*

*the following businesses and individuals  
whose gifts over the past year  
have been of significant help to the Playhouse:*

JACQUI HUBBARD and THE MADHATTERS CAST and PARENTS  
*for wonderful productions given in support of the  
Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation.*

THE ESSEX SAVINGS BANK  
*for its generous gift of funds to support Playhouse rehabilitation.*

MARGARET WHITING, ALAN OPPENHEIMER and JACK WRANGLER  
*for a glorious afternoon of song given to benefit the Playhouse.*

QUINNIPIAC COLLEGE and its President, JOHN LAHEY  
*for its generous contribution of lighting equipment.*

DR. ROBERT L. GOLD  
*for contributing and conducting a day-long retreat  
for the I.P.F. Board of Trustees.*

JERRY CLARK, JR.  
*for his loyalty to, and care of, the Playhouse building and grounds.*

LUKE JOHNSON  
*for painting the formerly-gloomy dressing room area.*

JIM VIEGA  
*for installing speaker shelves.*

HAL HOLCOMB  
*for his nurturing of the Playhouse's aged electrical system.*

JEAN DE GROOTH and PETER HANCE  
*for scraping, painting and carpeting the dressing rooms and cast lavatories.*

LEONARD WYETH  
*for acts of generosity too magnificent and numerous to mention here.*

OUR PLAYBILL ADVERTISERS  
*without whom you would not be holding this Playbill.  
Please give them your patronage.*





at the  
*Ivoryton Playhouse*  
THEATRE FOR CHILDREN  
MAIN STREET, IVORYTON

*All Performances at 11:00 a.m.*

\* EXCEPT AS NOTED BELOW \*

### SUMMER OF 1996

FRIDAY, June 28 – "Hansel and Gretel"  
(Performed by The Fanfare Theatre Ensemble)

FRIDAY, July 5 – "Jack and the Beanstalk"  
(Performed by The Fanfare Theatre Ensemble)

FRIDAY, July 12 – "Bubblemania"  
(Performed by Casey Carle)

FRIDAY, July 19 – "Beauty and the Beast"  
(Performed by Alliance Theatre Company)

FRIDAY, July 26 – "Tom Sawyer, Becky Thatcher & Friends"  
(Performed by The Penny Bridge Players and  
The Interborough Players)

FRIDAY, August 2 – "The Magic Man"  
(Performed by Paul A. Dilello)

MONDAY, August 5 – "Peter and the Wolf"  
\* Special Performance at 7:00 p.m. \*

and

FRIDAY, August 9 – "Peter and the Wolf"  
11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.  
(Performed by River Rep's own Youth Theatre)

FRIDAY, August 16 – "Tune Train"  
(Performed by Engineer Paul & Friends)

FRIDAY, August 23 – "Sum-Sum-Summertime"  
(Performed by Rainbow Music)

FRIDAY, August 30 – "Rumplestiltskin"  
(Performed by The Fanfare Theatre Ensemble)

*All  
Seats  
\$6*

*Box  
767-8348  
Office*

# UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE 1996

Friday, October 11 – Saturday, October 12  
Sunday, October 13

**Old Lyme High School Production**

Saturday, October 19 – 2:30 & 8:00  
***The American Magic Lantern Theater***

**"A Victorian Halloween"**

Tickets are \$10 – \$5 Children

Friday, October 25  
**Teen Halloween Dance**

Saturday, October 26  
**Annual I.P.E. Halloween Dance**

Sunday, October 27  
***Max Showalter Presents***

**"Barbara Meister"**

Tickets are \$15

Saturday, November 9  
**"Dancing At The Stage Door Canteen (1943)"**  
Tickets are \$12 – Veterans \$10 – Veterans in Uniform \$5

Friday, November 22  
**Madhatters Benefit**

Friday, Dec. 6, 7:00 pm – Saturday, Dec. 7, 2:00 & 7:00 pm  
Sunday, December 8, 2:00 pm

***The Alice People Theatre Presents***  
**"Christmas Show"**

Tickets are \$10 – \$5 Children

Saturday, December 14 2:30 & 8:00 pm  
***The American Magic Lantern Theater***

**"A Victorian Christmas"**

Tickets are \$10 – \$5 Children

Tuesday, Dec. 17 through Sunday, Dec. 22 (*Times to be announced*)  
***Max Showalter's***

**"Touch of the Child"**

Ticket Prices to be announced

For more information on The American Magic Lantern Theater, call (860) 345-7578

For more information on The Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation Events  
call (860) 767-7318 / (860) 767-8348

Also, We're On The Internet: <http://essexct.com/Playhouse/>

## HISTORY OF THE PLAYHOUSE

The building that is now the Ivoryton Playhouse was built in 1908 as a recreation hall for the employees of the Comstock-Cheney factory. In all likelihood, the building would have been demolished long ago but for its chance encounter with a remarkable man.

Milton Stiefel started his long career in theatre as an actor, playing with such famous personalities as Julia Marlow and Lionel Barrymore. Eventually, his career took him backstage and he became nationally known as "The Assistant Director", right hand and confidant of David Belasco, considered by historians as one of the greatest directors produced by the American theatre.

After Belasco's death, Stiefel continued as manager and stage director for many extravagant productions which, as was the custom in those days, traveled nationally and played in every major city in the United States. At the conclusion of one of these tours, Stiefel came to Essex in a severe state of exhaustion in order to rest and recuperate. He saw the unused recreation hall, knew it would be perfect for a resident stock company, and set about drafting contracts and putting a cast together. "Broken Dishes" had just closed in New York (reportedly with Bette Davis in her first Broadway role), and Stiefel opened with it during the week of June 17, 1930.

Thus the Ivoryton Playhouse became the first self-supporting summer theatre in the nation. Older theatres in Dennis, MA, and Skowhegan, ME were not self-supporting, but endowed by foundations of wealthy families. The Westport theatre was established a year after the Ivoryton.

Stiefel's company, made up mostly of his friends, called themselves The New York Players. They lived in private homes in Ivoryton, from which most of the sets and props were borrowed. The company did not break even until the last week of the summer, but that was enough to convince Stiefel that the deal was do-able. Throughout the ensuing years he continued to produce and direct in Ivoryton, and in 1938 he bought the building.

The theatre gained in prestige to the point that invitations to work there were highly prized in the theatrical profession. Its reputation grew nationally and Paramount Pictures produced a film short showing its complete operation. Established actors like Henry Hull and Norma Terris signed on to perform at Ivoryton. And newcomers like Katharine Hepburn and Cliff Robertson, both on their way to Broadway and Hollywood stardom, came along to help mold the Ivoryton legend.

Ivoryton's fame as one of America's leading summer showplaces continued to grow until the outbreak of World War II when the theatre went dark for several seasons, mainly because severe tire and gasoline rationing made it virtually impossible for audiences to get to Ivoryton. So Stiefel, physically unable to qualify for military service, went to Hollywood, where he served as a director for Columbia Pictures. But he vowed to return – and did – reopening the Playhouse after the war and presenting a parade of stars that included, among many others, Marlon Brando, Ethel Waters, Art Carney, Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Ezio Pinza, Lawrence Tibbett, Betty Grable, Madge Evans, Vivian Vance, Groucho Marx, June Lockhart, Gloria Vanderbilt and Don Ameche.

Stiefel continued at Ivoryton until his retirement in 1973, when he sold the theatre to Ken Krezel. Stiefel, however, remained active in an advisory capacity until his death in 1983.

Krezel, meanwhile, was having difficult times with the Playhouse and finally, in 1979, decided to sell the property. It was then, amid rumors that the historic theatre might be torn down to make way for a discount drug store, that the non-profit Ivoryton Playhouse Foundation was organized, and with the help of The Essex Savings Bank, came up with a mortgage to buy the property from Krezel for \$115,000.

The Foundation's early years (1979-1986), however, were also difficult as four different producers tried and failed to put the Playhouse summer season back on the road to lasting success. Then came 1987 and The River Rep which, like Stiefel's original stock company, consisted of a group of "New York Players".

The River Rep's productions were an artistic success from the start. River Rep has continued to build to a point where they have re-established The Ivoryton Playhouse as one of the leading summer theatres in America.

At the same time, the Foundation has dramatically improved the physical plant, step by step, so that today it is used for lively arts events throughout the year (see Upcoming Events page). It has truly become "A Theatre For All Seasons".